

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 72, 73, and 78-88 are pending. By this amendment, Claims 72, 73, 76, 78, and 80-86 are amended; Claims 74-77 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; and new Claims 87 and 88 are added. Support for the present amendments can be found in the original specification, for example, at page 18, lines 13-16, at page 19, lines 22-25, at page 23, line 13 to page 23, and in original Claim 77. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 72, 77, and 86 were objected to; Claims 72-74, 85, and 86 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Sugiyama (Japanese Publication No. 2001-305907); Claims 81-84 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugiyama in view of Murakami et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0136763, hereinafter “Murakami”); Claim 79 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugiyama in view of Koike et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0202495, hereinafter “Koike”); Claim 80 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugiyama in view of Kaname (Japanese Publication No. 07-005794); Claims 77 and 78 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugiyama in view of Kanagawa (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0109711); and Claims 75 and 76 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugiyama in view of Mishina et al. (Japanese Publication No. 2000-330433, hereinafter “Mishina”).

In response to the objection to Claims 72, 77, and 86, the claims are amended to correct the minor informalities as suggested in the Office Action. No new matter is added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection to Claims 72, 77, and 86 be withdrawn.

Turning now to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections, as discussed below.

Amended Claim 72 recites, in part, “a width of the lubricant is less than a width of the brush roller and the width of the brush roller is less than a width of the lubricant applying blade in contact with the latent image carrier in a longitudinal direction thereof in the image forming apparatus.” In an example embodiment of the invention, as a result of the above-noted relationship between the widths of the lubricant, brush roller, and lubricant applying blade, even if the brush roller rocks in the longitudinal direction of the photoconductor 1, all of the lubricant applied by the brush roller can be spread by the lubricant applying blade 3e to form a layer of the lubricant having a uniform thickness on the photoconductor 1. It is respectfully submitted that the cited references do not disclose or suggest each of the features recited in Claim 72.

Sugiyama describes an image forming device in which a cleaning blade 15a abuts the surface of a photoreceptor belt 1 on an upstream side of a lubricant applying position by a brush roller 82. Thus, residual toner is removed by the cleaning blade from the surface of the photoreceptor belt and the surface is then coated with lubricant leveled so that the layer of the lubricant has a uniform thickness. However, Sugiyama does not disclose or suggest that “a width of the lubricant is less than a width of the brush roller and the width of the brush roller is less than a width of the lubricant applying blade in contact with the latent image carrier in a longitudinal direction thereof in the image forming apparatus,” as recited in Claim 72. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 72, and all claims dependent thereon, as anticipated by Sugiyama, be withdrawn.

Claims 78-84 depend on Claim 72, and thus are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 72. Further, it is respectfully submitted

that the remaining cited references (Murakami, Koike, Kaname, Kanagawa, and Mishina) do not cure the above-noted deficiencies of Sugiyama. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Claims 78-84 be allowed.

New Claims 87 and 88 are added by the present amendment. Support for new Claims 87 and 88 can be found in the original specification, for example, at page 18, lines 13-16, and at page 19, lines 22-25. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added. New Claims 87 and 88 depend on Claims 72 and thus are patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claims 72. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that new Claims 87 and 88 be allowed.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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